



RACE TO THE TOP

ENSURING CALIFORNIA'S ELIGIBILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS FOR BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FEDERAL EDUCATION FUNDS

"We will seek any reforms or changes to the law deemed necessary...to ensure California is eligible to compete for our share of Race to the Top Recovery funds." (Gov. Schwarzenegger, [7/24/09](#))

Recently, President Obama and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan outlined federal requirements for Race to the Top, a \$4.35 billion competitive grant program in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act designed to support education reform and innovation. Under current law, however, California is ineligible to apply. Continuing his commitment to ensure California gets every possible dollar from the federal economic stimulus package, Governor Schwarzenegger today called a special session of the Legislature and proposed legislation to seek the changes in state law necessary so California can meet the Obama administration's eligibility requirements and be highly competitive for its fair share of these funds.

Background:

When outlining the federal requirements, the Obama administration singled out California's need for reform. "Is California going to lead the race to the top, or are you going to lead the retreat?" (U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, [5/22/09](#))

- Other states are already eligible for these funds. Failure to pass this legislation could jeopardize hundreds of millions of education dollars for California's students.
- President Obama's reform measures are policies Governor Schwarzenegger has supported since taking office. The reforms required by the Race to the Top program will help provide a better education for all California's students.

Governor Schwarzenegger stands with President Obama in seeking reforms to further improve California's education system:

Linking Student Achievement And Teacher Performance Data. The Obama administration has pointed at California, noting the state has no good way of distinguishing good teachers from bad teachers. "In California, they have 300,000 teachers. If you took the top 10 percent, they have 30,000 of the best teachers in the world. If you took the bottom 10 percent, they have 30,000 teachers that should probably find another profession, yet no one in California can tell you which teacher is in which category. Something is wrong with that picture." (U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, [6/8/09](#))

- Linking student and teacher data increases transparency in our education system. Encouraging school districts to connect student and teacher performance information helps identify high-quality teachers and administrators and help guide policy decisions and teaching practices so we can ensure the best possible educational outcome for our students.

Turning Around Struggling Schools. Transforming schools that consistently underperform increases the overall quality of our state's education system. Enacting stronger turn-around measures for the lowest 5 percent of schools helps ensure all our students can reach our state's high academic standards.

- Caps on charter schools are prohibited in the Race to the Top guidelines. California's charter school cap is an unnecessary barrier and gets in the way of innovation; by repealing it, California is supporting a healthy network of charter schools across the country.
- Parents will have more freedom to choose the school that best serves their children. Authorizing statewide open enrollment means students in the lowest-performing schools can attend any school in the state. Removing the cap on "districts of choice" allows any student in the state to attend school in a participating district.

Recruiting And Retaining High-Quality Teachers And Principals.

- Alternative pay schedules reward teachers who are consistently doing the toughest jobs. It highlights effective teaching practices, creating incentives to improve education delivery overall.
- Measuring student progress helps identify what works in the classroom. Since every student is different, looking at both growth measures and overall achievement scores provides a better picture of a student's progress over time.

Improving School Accountability Helps Prepare Our Students For Success In School And Beyond.

- Modifying how the state measures performance helps us more accurately track student and school progress from year to year. This helps us ensure that California can make continuous improvement in our education system.